

Session Five: Interpretation, Pt. 1

1. Revisiting Occasion, Purpose, Sectioning, and Summary Statements

- 1.1. Which verse supplies the occasion of Jude's letter? (verse 4)
- 1.2. Which verse most succinctly highlights Jude's purpose? (verse 3)
- 1.3. Share your group's sectioning and summary statements with the class.

2. Interpretation

2.1. The observation phase of an inductive study allowed us to learn **what** the text says. Turning our attention to interpretation, we want to focus on what the text **means**.

2.2. The discipline of interpretation involves dependence upon one of the works of the Holy Spirit: **illumination**.

"We should pray that the Holy Spirit would give us his illumination and thereby help us to understand rightly when we study Scripture..."¹

John 14:26 (ESV) - *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*

John 16:13-15 - *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*

2.3. To arrive at an accurate meaning/interpretation, there are some helpful **guidelines** to follow.

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 645.

Note: Precept Ministries offers 6 guidelines. These are included at the end of your packet. For our purposes this session, however, I simply want to focus on 4 helpful tips.

2.3.1. Guideline #1: **Saturate** Yourself in God's Word.

A thorough (and growing) comprehension of God's Word will keep you from wrong doctrine and will move you toward living worthy of the gospel (cf. Phil 1:27).

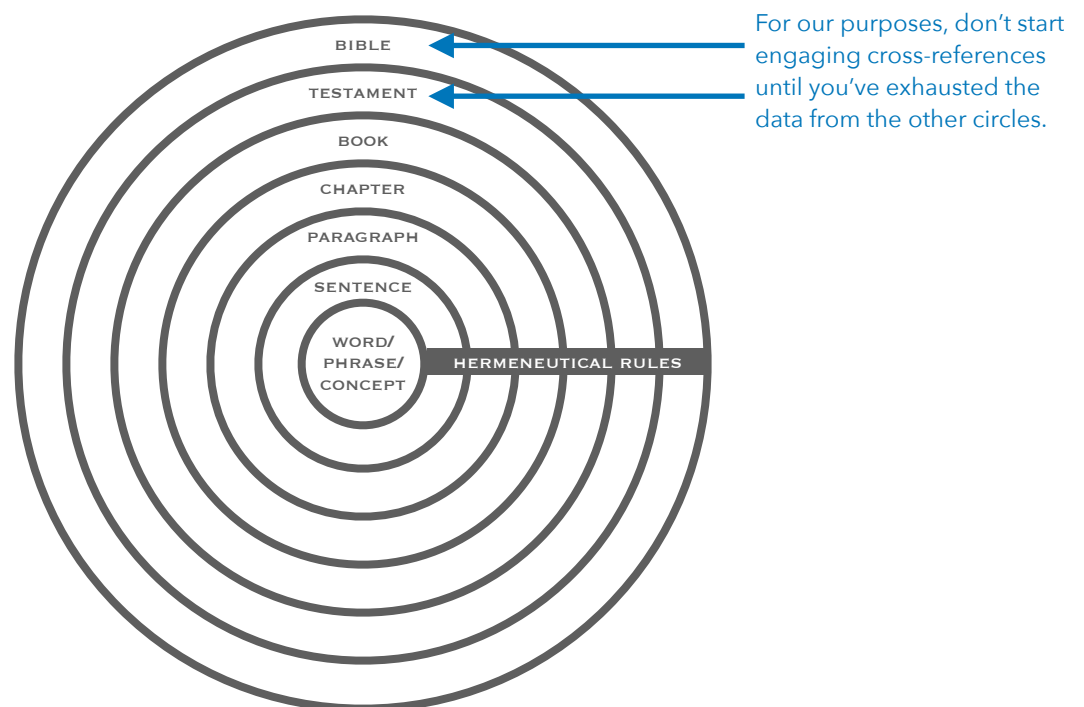
A comprehensive knowledge of God's Word will prove invaluable in making sense of the complete storyline of redemptive history, comparing Scripture with Scripture.

2.3.2. Guideline #2: **Study** Concentrically.

While following the hermeneutical rules for certain genres of biblical literature, we want to determine how a word, phrase, or concept is used in the context of its sentence, accompanying paragraph, chapter, Book, Testament, and finally how it fits within the overall scope of Scripture.

This is why a comprehensive knowledge of Scripture proves indispensable. Instead of relying on outside sources, you can master the Bible for Yourself (in the power of the Spirit).

A diagram of this phase could look like this:



A couple helpful questions to ask during this step are:

- 1) "Is my interpretation of a particular section of Scripture consistent with the theme, purpose, and structure of the book in which it is found?"²
- 2) "Is my interpretation consistent with other Scriptures about the same subject, or is there a glaring difference?"³

2.3.3. Guideline #3: **Submit** to Scripture's Own Interpretation.

Scripture will not contradict itself. Keep digging if it seems like it does. Let Scripture interpret Scripture and avoid interpretations based on obscure passages of Scripture. Scripture is perspicuous, meaning it is clear and able to be understood.

2.3.4. Guideline #4: **Compare** Interpretational Findings with **Commentary** Sources.

For the purposes of this study, we are solely working with the English text. We will not employ lexicons, dictionaries, or concordances to decipher specific word meanings.

This is a broad, entry-level type of study, one in which we just want to learn some of the mechanics of an inductive study while improving our understanding of the letter of Jude.

When using commentary sources, it would do us well to focus primarily on the cross-references being used. This will keep us in the Word and help us develop the skill of interpreting Scripture with Scripture.

2.3.4.1. We do not use commentary to **formulate** our interpretation, but rather to check and **expand** it.

"It is vital to use commentaries that examine the text with integrity and give explanations and comments that are in keeping with the context."⁴

"Be very wary if in your study you find something that no one else has ever seen before. God probably would not blind godly men to truth for almost 2000 years and suddenly reveal it to you."⁵

2.3.4.2. "Why should we use commentaries or other reference works? Certainly the purpose isn't so they'll do all the work for us or to deny the serious Bible student the pleasure of discovering the meaning of the text on his or her own. However, as we've stressed throughout this book, the Bible is an ancient, literarily diverse book communicating divinely inspired truth. Breaking this down according to the hermeneutical triad—history, literature, and theology—we find that digging into the

² Kay Arthur, David Arthur, and Pete DeLacy, *How to Study Your Bible* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2010), 56.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 59.

⁵ Ibid., 60

depths of Scripture often requires access to information not readily available or naturally known. This information may pertain to any number of specialized interests, including historical backgrounds, original-language grammar and syntax, ancient literary form, and theological motifs. By consulting commentaries and related resources, students have access to technical information they might not otherwise know. The primary reason we use commentaries is not to have others tell us what the Bible means. Rather, it's to provide **information** and **insight** that better equips us to make our own decisions about what the Bible says."⁶

3. Practicing Interpretation

We won't have time to interpret every verse, though in your own study this is what you should do.

We would need several weeks to thoroughly interact with Jude on an interpretation level.

What we'll do, however, is break out into 6 groups, each with a different verse (1 group will get two verses) to interpret. (Our primary aim is to practice this skill.)

Use the information from section 2 to keep you on track.

Do not consult cross-references or commentaries until you've reached the Testament level of the concentric circle diagram. (Commentaries can be picked up at the front of the auditorium. Please just grab one at a time.)

3.1. The overarching prompt for each group: In light of Jude's occasion and purpose, verse(s) _____ means _____.

3.1.1. "Enjoy swimming in the ocean, but don't neglect the view from the beach."

3.1.2. Keep an eye toward **application**. (Why does this text matter in my daily walk with the Lord? What am I supposed to do with it to bring honor to Christ?)

(Have the class form groups and then assign verses based on ability.)

Group #1 - v4

Group #2 - v5

Group #3 - v9

Group #4 - v11

Group #5 - vv14-15

Group #6 - v24

You will have the rest of today and most of the next session to complete this assignment.

3.2. When finished, **revise** your sectional summary statements and/or overall summary statement to better reflect your interpretational findings.

⁶ Richard Alan Fuhr Jr. and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Inductive Bible Study: Observation, Interpretation, and Application through the Lenses of History, Literature, and Theology* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016), 384.

JUDE (English Standard Version)

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.” But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion. These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever. It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage. But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.” It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Ongoing Questions/Themes: